

THE SECOND PARACALE FIRE —Marsman Mines Undamaged

(Another disastrous fire swept the town of Paracale—the first being in May, 1937—on March 28. None of the Marsman buildings were damaged, the Marsman compound being located on the outskirts of the town. The following account of the fire was written by the 12-year-old son of John Butler, experimental metallurgist at the Marsman test plant at San Mauricio).

THE PARACALE DISASTER

By John Butler, age 12

The fire started in the market, at about two o'clock, on the morning of March 28, 1940. Spreading on three sides the fire soon reached the Alatco Station. The men took all of the automobiles in the Station and left, taking

many homeless people to safety. Shortly after this there was a loud explosion, and the station itself was blown into the street. The fire continued spreading through the business district, burning many stores and destroying two of the town's three theaters. The municipal building caved in, and all that can be seen is the roof toppled in the ruins.

Thousands were left homeless when the residential section went up in flames. In the morning all that could be seen of that part was a mass of black coals, which were still burning and smoking.

The telephone wires were down and no cars or trucks were going through

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the town. The post office was not burned, but since the telephone wires were out, the operator was not able to reach Manila or other places.

None of the Marsman buildings were burned. As most of United Paracale Mining Company's workmen live in the town, only a skeleton crew reported for work. The managements of all com-

panies cared for their laborers who were burned out. The old church, which is made of stone, and consequently was not destroyed, is being used as a place for relief work, where food and clothing are being distributed to the hungry and homeless by the American women who acted as volunteers until the Red Cross can take over the task.

The fire, which made the sky red for miles around, could be seen from San Mauricio Mine, which is 20 kilometers from Paracale.

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